CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

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LETTER DATED 29 NOVEMBER 1993 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF MEXICO ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT TRANSMITTING THE TEXT OF A WORKING PAPER OF THE GROUP OF 21 ENTITLED "CONCLUSION OF A COMPREHENSIVE NUCLEAR-TEST-BAN TREATY"

In my capacity as Coordinator of the Group of 21 on the item "Nuclear test ban", I have pleasure in submitting herewith a Group of 21 working paper entitled "Conclusion of a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty".

I would be grateful if this working paper could be distributed as an official document of the Conference on Disarmament.

(Signed): Miguel Marín Bosch
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

GROUP OF 21

Working paper: "Conclusion of a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty"

The Group of 21 notes with satisfaction that the Conference on Disarmament is finally in a position to respond positively to the repeated calls of the international community over the last 30 years to conclude a comprehensive test-ban treaty (CTBT) by deciding "to give its Ad Hoc Committee on a Nuclear Test Ban a mandate to negotiate a CTB".

The Group of 21 believes that the conclusion of a CTBT is an indispensable measure to put an end to the nuclear arms race and to achieve the complete elimination of those weapons. To this end, it calls upon the international community, including the nuclear-weapon States, to begin urgently the negotiation of a CTBT, with a view to achieving a final text during 1994, in order to submit it as soon as possible to the General Assembly of the United Nations.

The scope of a CTBT prohibition was defined in the Partial Test-Ban Treaty wherein the Parties declared their commitment to conclude a treaty "resulting in the permanent banning of all nuclear test explosions, including all such explosions underground".

The Group of 21 is convinced that conditions today are propitious for the conclusion of a CTBT, bearing in mind the aim of general and complete disarmament under strict international control.

The negotiation of a CTBT should be guided, inter alia, by the following principles and elements in order to ensure its speedy conclusion and effective implementation:

(1) The treaty should define in general terms the prohibition of nuclear tests in all environments and forever. It should avoid a detailed definition of what is a nuclear test. The treaty, therefore, should eliminate any possibility of carrying out nuclear tests in any environment and it should be of unlimited duration.

(2) The CTBT to be developed must be non-discriminatory in character in the sense of providing equal rights and obligations to the States parties to the proposed treaty.

(3) An internationally supervised and effective verification should be sought. The decision on the verification system to be incorporated in the treaty should not complicate the entry into force of the prohibition. It is generally accepted that seismic verification will constitute the central element of the future system and that it should be its point of departure.

(4) The verification regime should be capable of dissuading would-be violators. The treaty should also contemplate a series of sanctions.

(5) The treaty should not contain any provision that could be interpreted as restricting the transfer of nuclear technology for peaceful purposes.